



News Release

Dixie National Forest

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RESOURCE BENEFIT FIRES ON THE DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST GROW

CEDAR CITY, Utah – The Dixie National Forest is managing four fires for resource benefit: Forsyth Ridge (on the Pine Valley Ranger District), Fife Ridge (on the Cedar City Ranger District), Straight Canyon (on the Powell Ranger District), and Pine (on the Escalante Ranger District).

All four fires are being managed as wildland fire use (WFU). WFU are naturally occurring fires (e.g., lightning strike) that are managed for resource benefit. Resource benefits may include a variety of expected results to benefit the ecosystem and public safety. Utilizing the WFU tool, forest managers can allow fire to play its natural role in the ecosystem. Among other things, natural fire can assist in reducing unhealthy numbers of trees, rejuvenate understory vegetation, regenerate aspen, create better habitat for wildlife, and reduce the risk of dangerously large fires. Firefighters will actively manage and monitor these four fires to ensure that they continue to produce forest health benefits.

The **Forsyth Ridge WFU** is located in the Pine Valley Wilderness area about 2 miles south from Pine Valley. It is about 209 acres in size and has been burning since August 19th. The Forsyth Ridge WFU is burning in mixed conifer and aspen with dead understory and will likely result in regeneration of some aspen. Additionally, creating openings in the vegetation will reduce the potential for larger fires in the future. This area will benefit from reintroduction of fire to the ecosystem. The Forsyth Trail is closed from the Trailhead in Pine Valley to the junction with the Summit Trail.

The **Fife Ridge WFU** has been burning since August 30th. It is about 704 acres. It is most visible from the Zion Overlook on Highway 14. It is burning in steep terrain, within aspen and conifer stands. Firefighters have taken management actions on the south and east portions of the fire to stop the spread in those directions. Fire continues to be allowed to burn to the north and west. This area will benefit from reintroduction of fire to the ecosystem. Burning in decadent stands will provide a healthier and younger forest in the area. It will also benefit wildlife and public safety by thinning an unnaturally thick forest. For public and firefighter safety, much of the Deep Creek Drainage south of Highway 14 is closed. More specifically, the area closed is east of the Webster Flat Road, south of Highway 14 to the main ridgeline that connects to Midway. Forest Road 31599 (Deep Creek Road), the Virgin River Rim Trail, Bristlecone Pine Trail, and any spur roads (e.g., 31601) into the area are closed.

The **Straight WFU** is currently 211 acres. It is located on the Powell Ranger District on the south half of the Paunsaugunt Plateau. The fire is continuing to burn in aspen areas providing additional resource benefit. For public and firefighter safety, the Grand View Trail between Mill Hollow and Swapp Canyon (including the Straight Canyon Trail) has been closed. The ATV route from Mill Hollow to Straight Canyon Trailhead is also closed.

The **Pine WFU** is burning on the Escalante Ranger District 20 miles north of Escalante and 20 miles northwest of Boulder. As of September 15th it is 200 acres in size and has experienced minimal growth in the last couple of days. The fire is burning in the understory of ponderosa pine, mountain brush, aspen, and mixed conifer. It is expected that this fire will help regenerate aspen, provide for better wildlife habitat and range, and reduce future large fire danger. Smoke may be visible on this fire from numerous places from Escalante to Boulder. There are no road or trail closures.

As the fires grow or change we will provide additional updates. Information on fires in Utah can be found at www.utahfireinfo.gov. For more information on WFU visit: www.fs.fed.us/fire/fireuse/.

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